

New look WI Hall

The fact that the Women's Institute Hall at the Ontario Agricultural Museum is undergoing a facelift is not news to readers of Home & Country. After all, the WI Hall was featured on the Fall 1985 cover and a story inside "spilled the beans" about the plans to refurbish the existing building to resemble "a typical WI Hall of 1928."

At our last deadline however, we had only sketchy information about the renovation plans. Today, we have the details. We trust the following story will answer any questions you might have about why the WI display is being changed, plans for the hall and grounds and the construction schedule.

By SUSAN BENNETT

Members of the executive of the Federated Women's Institute of Ontario and museum staff have unanimously agreed to change the displays and interpretation of the Women's Institute Hall on the museum grounds.

The structure and interior of the

meeting room are currently restored to the 1919 - 1929 time period, with some modern amenities including heat, electrical outlets and kitchen facilities. Beginning next season, the hall will look somewhat different. A single year, 1928, will be represented. The meeting room at the front of the hall will be set up to look as though a demonstration lecture course in sewing had just concluded for the afternoon. The kitchen will undergo a major refurbishing and, when complete, will represent a typical community hall kitchen of 1928.

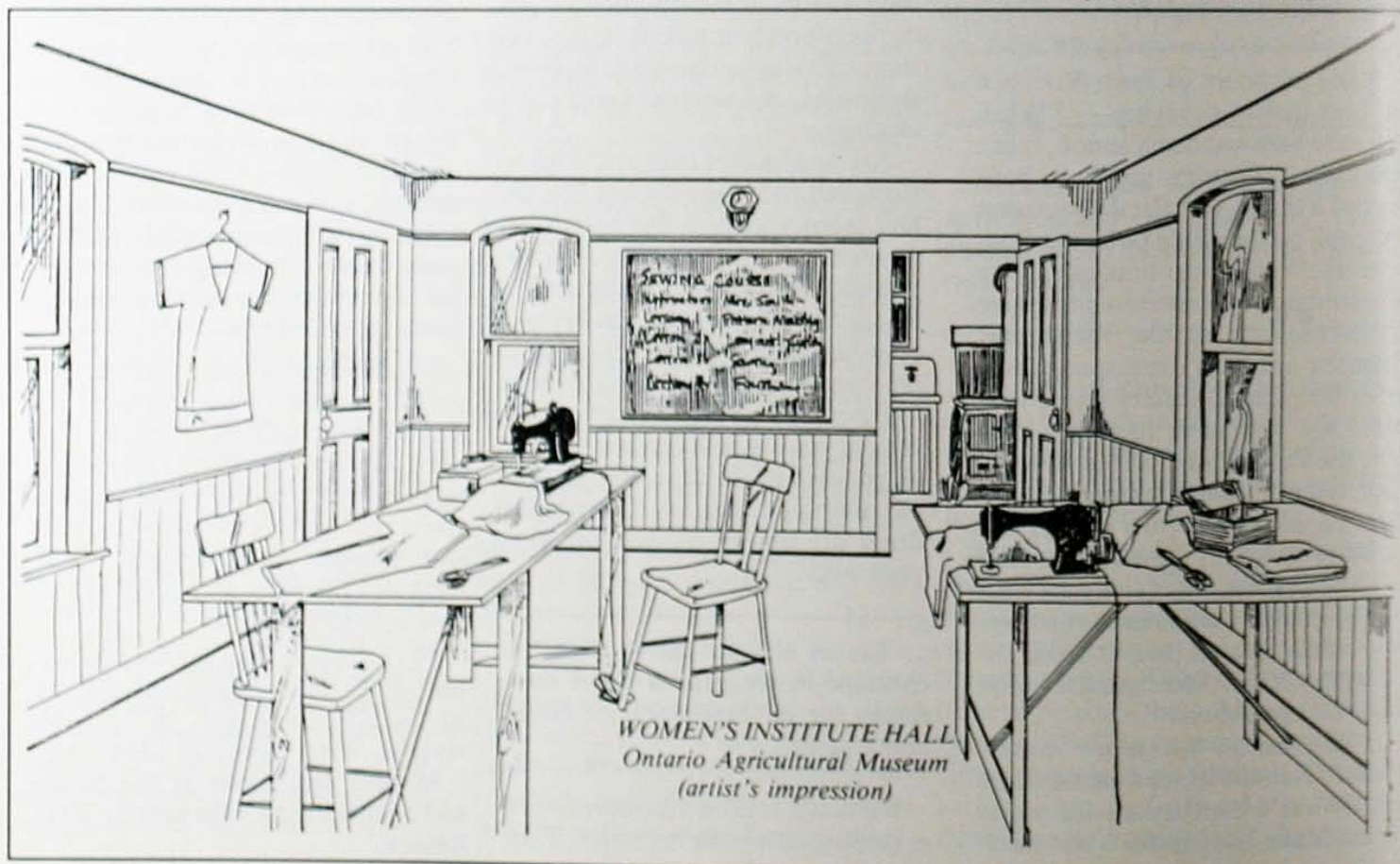
Why change the present display?

Periodic facelifts and changes of displays are necessary at most cultural institutions to appeal to the return visitor. This is a well known museum management fact, but there is more to it in this case. The new "Day of Discovery" brochure publicizing the Erland Lee Home, Adelaide Hoodless Homestead, and the Women's Institute Hall at the Ontario Agricultural Museum will undoubtedly rekindle interest in touring these sites.

Secondly, as the Ontario Agricultural Museum has matured through its development phases, the date of

1928 has been chosen for the north half of the Crossroads Community. This will enable us to exhibit rural village life in Ontario during a period when local agricultural and related services were so important to the farming community. This year is also significant for the Women's Institute. OAM researcher Lynn Campbell states the Women's Institute "was a thriving organization" in 1928 and that this particular period "is a good example of Women's Institute's experience, for it represents perhaps their peak of activity and importance in the Ontario rural community."

In keeping with one of the primary goals of the Women's Institute, education for rural women, a sewing demonstration lecture will be exhibited. This was one of three courses offered by the Women's Institute in co-operation with the Ontario Department of Agriculture. According to course regulations, our hall must have tables, chairs and at least three sewing machines. In addition, we must represent each participant as having "enough material to make a skirt waist, a skirt, and a dress; a twelve inch ruler, one spool of thread #60; one spool of thread #40; needles;



WOMEN'S INSTITUTE HALL
Ontario Agricultural Museum
(artist's impression)